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C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIJING 002139

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SUBJECT: EMBASSY RAISES FALUN GONG REFUGEE REPATRIATION
CASE WITH MFA

REF: EAP/CM GOLDMAN 3-29-07 E-MAIL

Classified By: Political Minister Counselor Daniel L. Shields, Reasons
1.4 (b/d).

¶1. (C) Post contacted the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Department of International Organizations Human Rights division March 30 to inquire about the reported unlawful repatriation from Russia March 28 of refugees Ma Hui, a Falun Gong practitioner, and her daughter Ma Ding (ref). Xu Jing, an officer in the Human Rights Division, said she has no information about the case. She promised to look into it, however, adding that she has shared the details with the IO Department's office that manages refugee issues as well as with the MFA's Consular officials. UNHCR has recognized the family as refugees and their claim for refugee status in Russia is in process, UNHCR officials in Beijing confirmed, noting that Ma Hui's husband, Li Zhenguang, remains in Russia.

¶2. (C) The case is a difficult one for UNHCR in China to handle, said Veerapong Vongvarotai, the organization's Regional Representative for China and Mongolia. Because the refugees are Chinese nationals in China, the Government will likely consider any involvement by UNHCR as interference in its internal affairs. (Note: Vongvarotai has not received independent confirmation that the Mas have in fact entered China. End note.) He is awaiting guidance from UNHCR headquarters on how to proceed. Nonetheless, Vongvarotai has contacted the Beijing Public Security Bureau to ask about the Mas' status. The PSB reported they have no information and that in any event border officials at the airport have prime responsibility for administering repatriation cases, Vongvarotai said. He related that the UNHCR office in Moscow is preparing to make a public statement about the case.
RANDT